

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are all the claims pending in the application. By this amendment, Applicant is amending claims 1-15 and adding new claims 16-19. Applicant submits that no new matter is added.

Formal Matters

Applicant notes that the Examiner indicated on the Office Action Summary that the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed on April 21, 2005 was attached to the current Office Action. The IDS, however, was not attached to the Office Action. As such, Applicant kindly requests that the Examiner attach the IDS with the next action and, if the references disclosed in the IDS have been considered, acknowledge that the references were considered.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 10, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant is: amending claim 1 to recite “a neck” and delete the phrase “such as;” amending claim 10 to delete the phrase “or the like;” and amending claim 15 to delete the phrase “or the like.” As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 1, 10 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8, 10-13, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Scherb (GB 857,189). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

As an initial note, an object of the current invention is to provide a snap-fastenable ring that provides safe fastening without the use of an outer covering piece such as a band. (See

current application, US Pub. No. 2006/0081654, ¶ 0004.) As such, claim 1 recites that “stiffener means are provided inside said snap-fastener portion for substantially preventing said snap-fastener portion from deforming after snap-fastening.” Applicant respectfully submits that Scherb does not disclose such features. Rather, Scherb discloses that there is an external tightening clip 51 provided on the outside of the snap-fastening means. (See Scherb, page 2, line 27 to page 3, line 2; page 4, lines 57-60; and FIGS. 1 and 5.) Thus, Scherb does not disclose all of the recited features of claim 1 and, in fact, teaches away from the claimed subject matter. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Regarding claims 2-8, 10-13, and 15, these claims depend from independent claim 1. Applicants submit that these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Scherb (GB 857,189). Applicant submits that claims 9 and 14 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

New Claims

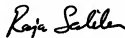
Applicant is adding new claims 16-19. Applicant submits that claims 16 and 17 are allowable by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1. Claims 18 and 19 require a, *inter alia*, resilient or rigid stiffener element inside the snap-fastener portion, which is not taught by the prior art.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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